New foundations for Ontario education, background information

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Background Information

Open Learning Partnerships

MAR 1 0 1995

- Curriculum
- School Councils
- Excellence in Teaching
- Assessment in Ontario
- Student Achievement: Early Literacy
- School Board Reductions
- Information Technology in our Schools

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March 1995

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Ontario
Ministry of Education and Training
Ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation

Ministry of Education and Training

Backgrounder/Renseignements

Ontario

Ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation

Curriculum

Province-Wide Curriculum

The Ministry of Education and Training will assume responsibility for curriculum development, and thus eliminate the current duplication of effort. School boards are now spending about 30 million dollars a year on curriculum activity. By eliminating the duplication in curriculum development, a lot of that money can be put back into the classrooms of Ontario.

In developing a completely consistent province-wide curriculum, the ministry will work with teachers, students, parents and representatives from the community at large, including business and labour.

In addition, the curriculum will be evaluated with input from national and international experts to ensure that our standards, outcomes and curriculum are world class.

The process of developing the new curriculum materials will begin this spring.

The new province-wide curriculum will cover the whole elementary/secondary education of students from JK to the end of secondary school, and will include expectations for achieving excellence.

The Common Curriculum will evolve into a series of documents that will make up the new province-wide curriculum for JK to the end of secondary school. The Common Curriculum will include Outcomes, Standards and classroom ready curriculum material.

Outcomes and Standards

Outcomes are what students are expected to learn. Standards are levels of achievement against which student learning can be measured.

Provincial Outcomes for Grades 1 to 9, for both English and French language schools were released in February 1995.

Also released were Provincial Math and Language Standards for Grades 1 to 9.

Development will begin in March 1995 on standards in the program areas of science and technology, the arts, and personal and social studies.

Outcomes and standards for secondary school will also be developed.

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Ministry of Education and Training

Backgrounder/Renseignements

Ontario

Ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation

School Councils

On February 10, 1995, Premier Bob Rae announced that all Ontario schools should start setting up school councils beginning in September 1995. Councils must be fully operational within the 1995-96 school year. Recently, the Royal Commission on Learning and the Ontario Parent Council have recommended that school-community councils be mandatory to give parents a greater say in how our schools are run and to strengthen partnerships with the community.

The education of Ontario's children and young people is a shared responsibility involving the schools, the students themselves, their parents and members of the school community. Parents have a right to participate in the education of their children and can contribute knowledge and skills. The community also offers a wealth of experience and expertise that can benefit the education system. Students should also be given opportunities to advise in matters that affect their eduction.

Many Ontario schools already ask parents and community partners for advice on school-related issues. To make sure that this happens province-wide, legislation will be introduced requiring school boards to develop a policy that will ensure school councils are established in all schools.

Implementation

Legislation will be introduced in the spring session of the legislature to ensure that school councils become mandatory. Beginning as early as September 1995, councils must be fully operational within the 1995-96 school year.

Membership

The composition of school councils will be flexible, so that they can reflect their communities, but the Ministry of Education and Training has set minimum requirements that must be met by every school council in the province. Councils must have:

- parents/guardians (elected by parents whose children attend the school)
- community representatives such as business people, labour representatives, members of ethno-cultural groups, or representatives of community support groups (appointed by the school council as a whole)
- a student (selected by the student body)*

*Students will only be obligatory council members in secondary schools. In elementary schools, the principal will decide whether student participation is appropriate.

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Ministry of Education and Training

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Ontario

Ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation

Excellence in Teaching

Teachers have one of the most important and most difficult jobs in our society – helping students acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they will need to become productive citizens.

As the Royal Commission on Learning points out in its report *For the Love of Learning*, teachers are the key to excellence in education. To be able to live up to our high expectations, they must have our full support and the knowledge and skills that they need to carry out their responsibilities in a fast-changing world.

The provincial government is acting on many of the recommendations of the Royal Commission by introducing teaching reforms that will greatly improve educational training and standards of practice.

The Ontario College of Teachers

A new professional body, the Ontario College of Teachers will be established. The College will govern everyone who holds an Ontario Teaching Certificate and wishes to maintain his or her qualification to teach. Its governing body will include teachers in both English and French language schools, parents, students, and representatives of faculties of education, school boards, the ministry, and the private sector.

The College will be responsible for developing:

- standards of practice (September 1996);
- outcomes (expected results) for teacher education programs (September 1996);
- two-year teacher education programs (September 1997);
- a provincial framework for professional development for all educators (January 1997);
- a procedure for certification and recertification (September 1997);
- a complaints process for students and parents;
- accreditation of teacher training programs and;
- a new emphasis on leadership skill development for principals and supervisory officers.

It will report to the public on its activities annually.

An implementation committee has been set up to advise the Minister on the terms of reference and necessary legislation for the College. It will report by September 1995. Frank Clifford, formerly executive-director of the Teacher Education Council of Ontario has been appointed to head the committee.

These improvements will ensure that beginning teachers are well prepared for the challenges that they will face in the classroom.

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In addition, all practising teachers will be required to upgrade their knowledge and skills and renew their certificates every five years.

The Ontario College of Teachers will develop procedures for certification and recertification, as well as methods for helping prepare and evaluate teachers who received their training outside the province or who have been out of the classroom for some time.

More Information

The Ministry of Education and Training has set up a special phone line so that the public can call free of charge to get more information about New Foundations for Ontario Education. The number is 1-800-565-0861.

Members of the Agency

The Education Quality and Accountability Office will have seven volunteer part-time board members, including a chair, and will be managed by a CEO. Here are their names:

Board Members

Chair

Richard Johnston, Chair of the Ontario Council of Regents for Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology

Other members

V. Maureen Kempston Darkes, President, General Motors of Canada Limited, Oshawa

Hoda ElMaraghy, Dean of Engineering, University of Windsor

André J. Lalonde, President, Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario

Anthony S. Manera, Former President, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Ottawa

Fred W. Pomeroy, Executive Vice-President, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers of Canada, Ottawa

Bette M. Stephenson, former Minister of Education

Chief Executive Officer

Joan M. Green, Director, Board of Education for the City of Toronto.

Upcoming Tests

Provincial tests

September 1996: annual testing of Grades 3, 6, 9, and 11 students in reading, writing and mathematics begins.

National tests

National tests, which are carried out under the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP), will take place in:

1996, 1999: Science
1997: Mathematics
1998: Reading and Writing

International tests

Spring 1995: Third International Mathematics and Science Test (TIMSS)

More Information

The Ministry of Education and Training has set up a special phone line so the public can call free of charge to get more information about New Foundations for Ontario Education. The number is 1-800-565-0861.

Early Childhood Education Programs

The Royal Commission on Learning stresses the importance of early childhood education, which it describes as "a carefully structured enterprise that combines an introduction to learning, often through play, with high quality education."

Many parents in Ontario already recognize the benefits of early childhood education. Last year, 101,745 children attended junior kindergarten and 139,417 attended senior kindergarten. This represents about 85 per cent of four year olds and 95 percent of five year olds in the communities where the programs are offered.

The Ministry of Education and Training agrees with the Royal Commission on the importance of early education. Demonstration projects for four- and five-year olds, combining full day junior and senior kindergarten with child care, will begin this fall.

An important feature of the government's Early Childhood Education Program is that the program will be optional. It will be up to parents to decide whether to enrol their four- and five-year olds.

The ministry will invite public and separate school boards to make submissions for demonstration projects this spring. The first programs will be introduced in September 1995. Projects may take place at schools or other locations, such as community agencies or child care centres. English- and French-language projects will be started in both urban and rural parts of the province.

The trial phase of the Early Childhood Education Program will last five years. After the first year 2,500 children are expected to take part each year. Research and evaluation will be built into the project design. The findings from research will be used to develop programs of consistently high quality for the whole province.

The children in the demonstration projects will be taught by teams of certified teachers, early childhood educators and teaching assistants, with a ratio of twelve children per adult.

There will be no charge for the program during the regular school day, from 9 am to 3:30 pm. A fee will be charged for the 7–9am and 3:30 - 6 pm portions and during the summer. Childcare subsidies will continue to be available for parents, based on ability to pay.

More Information

The Ministry of Education and Training has set up a special phone line so that the public can call free of charge to get more information about New Foundations for Ontario Education. The number is 1-800-565-0861.

School Board Co-operation

Legislation will be introduced requiring boards to save money through shared services and personnel. Boards will be required to report annually to the ministry and the public on the extent of these savings and shared services. This reporting will begin in the spring of 1996.

Trustees

The Task Force will develop a formula for trustee representation which will ensure smaller, more effective boards.

Legislation will also be introduced to cap the compensation of trustees at a maximum of $20,000 a year. Limits will also be placed on the amount which boards can pay to trustees serving as board chair or vice-chair or for service on board committees. This will go into effect following the 1997 municipal elections.

More Information

The Ministry of Education and Training has set up a special phone line so the public can call free of charge to get more information about New Foundations for Ontario Education. The number is 1-800-565-0861.

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, through the Ontario Network Infrastructure Program, will provide funding of $5-million to the Educational Network of Ontario (ENO), a teacher's network.

Such funding support will make the ENO's resources available to many more Ontario educators. This money is in addition to $4.25-million already committed to the ENO by the Ministry of Education and Training.

The Ontario Network Infrastructure Program is a $100-million jobsOntario Capital initiative which helps accelerate the development and use of information networks, in order to promote economic renewal.

Support for Teachers

School boards will now be able to purchase or lease computers for classroom teachers. Teachers will be able to use their new machines and software to support them in the classroom, to track students' progress and to produce reports. In addition, boards will be able to use up to 10 percent of their grants for technical support for teaching staff (for example, installing educational software and solving technical problems).

More teachers and administrators will find connection to the Ontario Education Highway and to each other an invaluable way to share resources and information.

The new Ontario College of Teachers will consider information technology as a significant component of all teacher education programs, both for those new to the profession and for those already teaching.

Educational Software

Funding for the Ontario Software Acquisition Program will be increased to acquire more province-wide licences for curriculum-based software, in English and in French. Whenever possible, licences will be negotiated to allow students and teachers to use the software at home.

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade will support the development of educational software with an investment of $15-million through the Sector Partnership Fund. This fund is a $150-million, six-year program designed to encourage collaborative initiatives.

Common Goals for Information Technology in Education

The Education Information Technology Alliance is being created to promote and support the integration of information technology into the classroom. The Alliance will bring together groups from Ontario's school system and the private sector to help school boards create common technology plans and develop provincial technology standards.

The government is planning a symposium, to be held in late March 1995, about new directions for information technology in our schools, colleges and universities. The symposium, "Education as a Model User of Technology", will bring together key decision-makers who are involved at all levels of the education system and who understand the potential applications of information technology to education research, teaching, and support services. Participants will include representatives of government, private business, teachers and professors, students, parents, and organizations involved in educational technology such as the Educational Network of Ontario and TVOntario.

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OVERVIEW OF NEW FOUNDATIONS INITIATIVES

SCHOOL COUNCILS

Policy Direction

Parents and community members play an essential role in the success of their local school and should have a formal structure to support their participation in decision-making about school matters. Many schools already ask parents and community partners for advice on school-related issues. The government is committed to ensuring that this is done by all publicly-funded elementary and secondary schools.

School boards and minority-language sections of boards are required to develop a policy which ensures that a school council will be established in each of their schools by the end of the 1995-96 school year. School councils will act as advisory bodies to principals and, on occasion to school boards, on a range of school-related issues, including:

- *curriculum and program priorities;*
- *assessment and accountability;*
- *school profiles to be used in the selection of principals;*
- *school budget priorities;*
- *involvement of community support agencies in schools;*
- *the school-year calendar;*
- *school code of behaviour;*
- *community use of school facilities.*

School councils will serve as an important vehicle for promoting and strengthening school-community linkages. There will be flexibility in school council composition and operations, with minimum requirements established that all schools must meet. Members will not be paid for being part of a school council.

Milestones

- Legislation will be introduced to ensure that school councils become mandatory.
- Beginning in September 1995, councils are to be fully operational by June 1996.
- The Ministry of Education and Training will work with school boards, community groups and professional associations to develop a School Council Handbook that will be available in September 1995 as a resource to assist local communities in setting up and operating their councils.
- By the end of the 1994/95 school year, the Ministry of Education and Training will prepare, consult, and publish a statement of rights and responsibilities for both parents and students.
- In the spring of 1996 the ministry will sponsor a School Council Forum to share best practices.

Further MET communication

Program/Policy Memorandum to be issued in March 1995.

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CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS

Province-wide Common Curriculum

Policy Direction

The new foundations being put in place are aimed at creating a school system that is dedicated to excellence and focussed on the learner. We can set high expectations for our students if a consistent, province-wide curriculum (French and English) with clearly-defined outcomes and standards is developed for all schools. Costly duplication through individual board production of curriculum materials needs to be eliminated and these resources need to be redirected to the classroom.

The Ministry of Education and Training will be leading the coordination of curriculum development to ensure that there is a consistent, inclusive, province-wide curriculum for the whole of publicly-funded elementary and secondary education. The ministry will work cooperatively with school boards and with teachers, students, parents, and representatives from diverse community groups in a provincially-led process to develop new, high quality English- and French-language curriculum materials, that will in their entirety be called "The Common Curriculum". Following a multi-year development plan and building upon the best of existing resources, The Common Curriculum will evolve into a series of documents with three components–outcomes, standards and school-ready curriculum material. The curriculum will be flexible enough to allow all schools to reflect local needs and resources.

Outcomes documents will clearly set out what students in Ontario are expected to learn at specific points in their education. Standards documents will define levels of achievement against which student learning can be measured, through initiatives such as

the annual province-wide testing program. School-ready curriculum materials will be designed to support teachers in delivering outcomes-based learning. Collectively this series of documents will comprise the new province-wide curriculum for Junior Kindergarten to the end of secondary school for implementation by all French- and English-language schools in Ontario.

Milestones

- Outcomes, standards, and classroom-ready curriculum materials will be developed and implemented according to the following schedule:

  JK/K
  - Draft curriculum outcomes/expectations available for consultation, Fall 1995
  - Draft school-ready curriculum materials available for consultation, Fall 1996
  - Curriculum outcomes/expectations and school-ready curriculum materials available for Fall 1997, for implementation by September 1998

  Grades 1 to 9
  - Development of provincial curriculum materials begins, Spring 1995
  - Finalized standards for Mathematics and Language released for implementation, September 1996
  - Field testing of standards for remaining areas begins, September 1996
  - Finalized standards for remaining areas released for implementation, September 1997

  Grades 10 to 12
  - Development of outcomes, standards and curriculum materials begins, Spring 1996
  - Implementation of new graduation requirements begins for Grade 9 students entering secondary school in September 1996 (see Secondary School Reform)
  - Implementation of Grade 10-12 curriculum outcomes and standards begins, September 1997

Related MET communication

February 7, 1995, release by the ministry of The Common Curriculum: Policies and Outcomes for Grades 1 to 9, The Common Curriculum: Provincial Standards, for Grades 1 to 9 and The Common Curriculum: Provincial Standards, Language, Grades 1 to 9 (for both English- and French-language schools).

Further MET communication

Memorandum to outline the curriculum development process to be issued in Spring 1995.

Reporting Student Achievement

Policy Direction

Currently there is a wide range of methods for reporting student achievement across the province. Parents have expressed the need for consistency and clarity in reporting on how students are doing in school.

The Ministry of Education and Training will take a leadership role to develop a standard way for school reporting of student achievement to parents. The new report card will be designed to provide parents with clear, consistent, and understandable information on how their children are doing at school. The design will provide for some flexibility to allow for local information and reporting needs.

Milestones

- Beginning in Spring 1995, the ministry will work with school boards, teachers, parents, and community groups to develop the report card.
- Report card models will be field-tested during the 1995/96 school year.
- It is anticipated that implementation of the new report card would begin in the 1996/97 school year.

Further MET communication

Memorandum from the ministry to school boards about the development process to be issued in March 1995.

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ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Assessment

Policy Direction

Curriculum reform will establish the high standards for student achievement for all French- and English-language elementary and secondary schools in the province. Related measures are required that systematically and consistently provide high quality information about how well individual students and the system as a whole are doing in meeting these high standards. Such information should also prompt and support excellent practices and effective decision-making at the school, board, and provincial levels.

Beginning in the 1996/97 school year, school boards and their students will be required to participate in a province-wide, annual testing program for all students in Grades 3, 6, 9 and 11 in reading, writing and mathematics. The tests are to be based upon the province-wide curriculum outcomes and standards. The tests will be given to English and French-language students in public and separate schools and those private schools offering the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Milestone

- An independent body, the Education Quality and Accountability Office (see below) will be responsible for working with school boards to implement the testing program:
  - test development, based on the province-wide curriculum, outcomes, and standards, will begin in Spring 1995
  - annual student testing will begin in the 1996/97 school year.

Further Communication

To be communicated by the Education Quality and Accountability Office.

Education Quality and Accountability Office

Policy Direction

Accountability is a key element of the government's education reform strategy. The province is committed to addressing the need for a long-term and cost-effective plan for evaluating, reporting and improving the performance of students. There is also the need to strengthen Ontario's capacity to assess the effectiveness of the education system as a whole in a way that contributes to continuous improvement. An independent monitoring and reporting mechanism will provide the public with credible, objective information about

the performance of the system and strengthen public confidence in education. Such a mechanism would also provide educators with an additional source of information to assist them in meeting student needs.

The government will introduce legislation to establish a new, independent agency, the Education Quality and Accountability Office, to implement the ministry's requirement that school boards and their students participate in an annual province-wide testing program in Grades 3, 6, 9 and 11 and to ensure quality and accountability in English and French-language education. The mandate of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) will be to:

- *design new province-wide tests and manage their administration, in cooperation with school boards;*
- *report the results of the tests to the public;*
- *make recommendations to the government, educators and the public to improve the performance of the education system;*
- *conduct research on educational assessment and accountability practices;*
- *collect quantitative and qualitative data that can help to determine the effectiveness of the education system; and*
- *play a role in improving the accountability of postsecondary institutions*

The Ministry of Education and Training will continue to set curriculum and standards and decide what testing needs to be done in the province.

Milestones

- A seven-member, part-time, volunteer board of directors was appointed in February 1995 to govern the EQAO.
- The first annual province-wide tests will be given to students in the 1996/97 school year under the direction of EQAO.
- EQAO will manage Ontario's participation in upcoming national and international tests as of 1996.
- First annual EQAO report to the Minister and to the public is to be issued in Summer 1996.

Further MET communication

To be determined in conjunction with the EQAO executive.

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TEACHER EDUCATION

Policy Direction

As the Royal Commission on Learning has pointed out, teachers are the key to excellence in education. The teacher education reforms are intended to ensure that teachers are well equipped for the challenges of the modern classroom. The new initiatives will strengthen the profession and make it more accountable to the public.

Ontario College of Teachers
A new professional body will be established to govern everyone who holds an Ontario Teaching Certificate and wishes to maintain his or her qualification to teach. Its governing body will include teachers in both English and French language schools, parents, students and representatives of faculties of education, school boards, the ministry and the private sector.

Teacher Education Programs
Pre-service teacher education programs will be expanded to two years to give students more classroom experience. The program outcomes - the knowledge, skills and attitudes that teachers must have when they enter the profession - will be determined by the Ontario College of Teachers. Programs will be assessed every five years using criteria developed by the College. The College will also accredit all teacher education programs offered by faculties of education in Ontario and will review the admission criteria which they use.

Standards of Practice
Standards of practice will be developed by the Ontario College of Teachers which will clearly state what teachers, principals and supervisory officers in Ontario schools must know and be able to do throughout their careers. These standards will be the basis for assessing knowledge and competence in areas such as specific subjects, teaching ability,

English and/or French, ability to use computer technology, and familiarity with provincial curricula and policies.

Standards of practice will apply to all educators who hold an Ontario Teacher's Certificate, including principals, directors and supervisory officers, professors with faculties of education and Ministry of Education and Training staff.

Professional Development

The Ontario College of Teachers will design a provincial framework for professional development which will apply to all teachers and other educators in the province who hold an Ontario Teacher's Certificate. The College will establish provincial priorities for professional development, ensure that these priorities are addressed throughout the province and that they reflect provincial, local and individual needs. The College will accredit professional development programs and those who deliver them. A new emphasis will be put on leadership skill development for principals and supervisory officers.

Certification

New teachers will have to pass an admission exam in order to be certified to teach in the province. In addition, all practising teachers will be required to upgrade their knowledge and skills and update their certificates every five years. The College will develop procedures for certification and mandatory professional growth, as well as methods for helping prepare and evaluate teachers who received their training outside the province or who have been out of the classroom for some time.

Milestones

- An implementation committee has been established to advise the Minister on the membership and terms of reference for the College. It will report by September 1995.

- The College will be responsible for developing:

  - standards of practice (September 1996);
  - outcomes for teacher education (September 1996);
  - two-year teacher education program (September 1997);
  - a provincial framework for professional development for all educators (January 1997);
  - a procedure for certification and re-certification (September 1997);
  - a complaints process for students and parents;
  - accreditation of teacher training programs and;
  - a new emphasis on leadership skill development for principals and supervisory officers.

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EARLY LEARNING

Mandated Early Literacy Programs

Policy Direction

It is recognized that a strong foundation in the early years of a child's development is critical for future success in learning and life. Early education promotes excellence and equity by contributing to successful development of the child and increasing opportunities for later learning and success. The early learning initiatives will help to ensure that young children are ready to learn, experience successful school entry, develop a strong foundation in early literacy, and demonstrate achievement in literacy by the end of Grade 3.

Beginning in September 1996, school boards are required to plan for and to provide early literacy programs for children from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. Early literacy programs should include strategies to prevent learning difficulties among children in Junior Kindergarten/Kindergarten. The program in Grades 1 to 3 should enhance interventions addressing difficulties in reading, writing and speaking.

Milestones

- During 1995-96, school boards will be required to develop and submit for ministry approval comprehensive early literacy plans for junior kindergarten to Grade 3. The plan will:
  - include initiatives for junior kindergarten and kindergarten which focus on preventing literacy problems and encouraging parents and the community to support early readers;

- include mandatory literacy intervention programs such as Reading Recovery or other early literacy interventions which have proven to be effective in Grades 1 to 3; and
- detail how schools will address the needs of English and French-speaking children from a variety of backgrounds - the disadvantaged, those for whom French or English is a second language, racial and ethnocultural groups, children with disabilities and Aboriginal children.

- Schools boards will implement approved plans beginning in September 1996.

- To help boards with their early literacy plans and to support new/enriched literacy activities, the ministry is establishing an Early Literacy Fund of $38 million over five years (1995 to 1999) to support a number of initiatives, such as
  - intervention programs for children who are having problems learning to read, write and speak well;
  - training for teachers to identify and support children who are slow in developing literacy;
  - activities which will encourage parents and other people in the community to help children read well; and
  - provisions for addressing the needs of English and French-speaking children from a variety of backgrounds - the disadvantaged, those for whom French or English is a second language, racial and ethnocultural groups, children with disabilities and Aboriginal children.

Further MET communication

Information about the criteria and process for accessing the fund will be communicated to boards in the spring of 1995.

A Program/Policy Memorandum regarding the required board plans will be issued in September 1995 after consultation on a draft during the spring and summer.

Early Childhood Education Curriculum

Policy Direction

The junior and senior kindergarten curriculum will provide a consistent approach to what young children learn and will be part of the continuum of programming from JK to Grade 12. It will introduce the foundation skills for the program areas in the document, The Common Curriculum: Policies and Outcomes Grades 1-9, and include activities that support the development of literacy, numeracy, and the social and emotional development of the child. It will be an age-appropriate education program which promotes young children's learning. This curriculum will be linked to the Children's Developmental Framework from Birth to 12, which describes child development and is currently being developed as part of the ChildCare/Recreation/Education Co-ordination Project, a joint

project of the Ministries of Community and Social Services, Culture, Tourism and Recreation and Education and Training.

Milestones

- MET in collaboration with education and other stakeholders will develop JK/K curriculum policies, outcomes/expectations and school ready curriculum according to the following schedule:
  - draft policies and outcomes/expectations available for consultation, Fall 1995
  - draft school-ready curriculum materials available for consultation, Fall 1996
  - curriculum outcomes/expectations and school-ready curriculum materials available for release in Fall 1997 for implementation by September 1998.

- Guidelines regarding an early identification process which will aid in achieving consistency in the assessment of kindergarten children will be developed by MET in collaboration with stakeholders for implementation in Fall 1997.

Further MET communication

Draft policies and outcomes/expectations will be circulated for consultation in Fall 1995.

Early Childhood Education Program

Policy Direction

A new Early Childhood Education Program will be introduced for four- and five-year olds. It will eventually incorporate existing kindergarten and junior kindergarten programs by creating a full-day program combined with before- and after-school child care at the same location. The program will be voluntary for parents to access and mandatory for boards to offer. Introduction of the program will proceed gradually, with a demonstration phase for five years 1995 to 1999. Gradual phasing in of the program province-wide will begin in September 2000 and continue as money and space become available.

Milestones

- In April 1995, the Ministry of Education and Training will invite school boards and sections to make submissions for Early Childhood Education Program demonstration projects. It is expected that these submissions will be developed in partnership with local child care providers and child care community planning groups.

- Selected programs will be implemented in September 1995, with 500 students participating in the first year.

- By September 1996, all other demonstration sites will be operational with a total of 2500 students participating.

- The trial phase of the Early Childhood Education Program will last five years. Research and evaluation will be built into the project design, and the findings from research will be used to develop programs of consistently high quality for the whole province.

- Phase-in of full, province-wide implementation for all four and five year olds will begin in September 2000 as money and space become available.

Further MET communication

In April 1995, MET will send a memo to all chairs of school boards and sections and directors of school boards inviting interested boards to make submissions for Early Childhood Education Demonstration Projects. Included in the memo will be a set of criteria to be used by MET in evaluating the applications, and an explanation of the approval process, budget and timelines.

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SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM

Policy Direction

Students graduating from secondary school must have the necessary knowledge and skills to move from adolescence to adulthood and make informed choices about their educational and occupational future. Secondary school reform will strengthen core knowledge and skills of students while at the same time making all the various pathways to further study, training and careers clear and visible.

The Ministry of Education and Training will develop, in cooperation with its education partners and other stakeholders, a reformed, four-year secondary school program with clear and flexible pathways to support effective student transitions to college, university,

training programs and work. Changes at the secondary level will consist of the following elements:

- *a four-year secondary school program after Grade 8;*
- *province-wide curriculum for Grades 10 to 12 building on the Common Curriculum, Grades 1 to 9 (see Curriculum and Standards);*
- *province-wide testing in mathematics and language in Grades 9 and 11; (see Assessment and Accountability)*
- *creation of more clearly defined linkages to college, training and work with sufficient flexibility to allow students to move smoothly from pathway to pathway; and*
- *enhanced career awareness , educational and career planning to support students and parents to make informed decisions regarding career, education and work.*

Milestones

- Graduation requirements, including clear pathways for students between secondary schools and college, training and work will be identified and circulated to schools in the spring of 1996 for implementation with Grade 9 students beginning in September 1996.

- Curriculum outcomes and standards for Grades 10-12 will be ready for implementation in September 1997.

- Province-wide tests in mathematics and language in grades 9 and 11 in the 1996/97 school year under the direction of EQAO.

- Enhanced career awareness and educational and career planning:
  - training for guidance counsellors beginning in September 1996
  - expansion of co-op education programs beginning in September 1995
  - on-the-job training opportunities for senior students beginning in September 1995
  - linkages to community based career counselling beginning in September 1995
  - access to improved career information materials for students, parents and teachers beginning immediately.

Related MET communication

March 1, 1995, memorandum from the Deputy Minister on Secondary School Reform.

Announcement outlining further details of the reform initiative and a process for ensuring stakeholder input into the development of the secondary school program will be announced within the next month.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Policy Direction

Information technology skills are important to help Ontario students learn, and prepare for careers in the global economy. To ensure that students develop information skills and knowledge, schools need appropriate resources and teachers need support and training in using information technology in the classroom.

The government will be providing leadership, promoting partnerships with the private sector, and enhancing financial support to the education sector to improve the integration of information technology into the classroom.

Provincial funding will provide more computers for classrooms, and link more classrooms to the information highway. In terms of curriculum, computer skills will be taught to students throughout elementary and secondary school. In addition, the province will support the development of new curriculum-based education software, and increase support for the Ontario Software Acquisition Program to acquire more province-wide licences for curriculum-based education software in English and French.

MET will provide support to teachers by allowing a portion of the provincial computer grants to be spent on computers for classroom teachers, and on technical support for teachers. Teachers need pre-service and in-service training to learn more about how to use computers and how to teach information technology skills. The newly created Ontario

College of Teachers will provide guidance, and ensure that high quality training is available to teachers.

The government will provide leadership to encourage partnerships and secure private sector funds. Under a new incentive program, the government will contribute up to 50% towards technology projects involving school boards, the private sector and postsecondary institutions.

Milestones

- The provincial government will coordinate an investment of up to $500 million in technology over the next 5 years, and $100 million annually thereafter to continue improvements. This investment will:
  - annually provide 40,000 more computers for classrooms to reach the goal of one computer for every ten students by the year 2000
  - link classrooms to the information highway by requiring that all new schools are networked, linking existing classrooms as soon as possible
  - supporting the Education Network of Ontario through the Ontario Network Infrastructure Program
  - provide information technology resources and technical support for teachers
  - support the development and acquisition of curriculum-based software
  - promote partnerships among the government, school boards and the private sector.

- MET will host a symposium on information technology in education with key education, business and community representatives (March 1995).

- The Education Information Technology Alliance is being created to bring together groups from Ontario's school system and the private sector to promote and support integration of information technology. An interim committee will begin work in Spring to bring the EITA in place in September 1995.

Further MET communication

Further information on funding for information technology will be provided to assist school boards with information technology planning (March 1995).

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SCHOOL BOARD OPERATIONS

Policy Direction

School board operations need to be streamlined to achieve system-wide cost-efficiencies that allow for maximum resources to be focussed on the classroom. Education reforms affecting school board operations and boundaries will reflect the government's ongoing commitment to equity.

Within the context of the government's commitment to respect the constitutional education rights of Roman Catholic and Francophone Ontarians, the government intends to reduce the overall number of school boards by between 40 and 50 percent through a process of board amalgamations and the establishment of new school board boundaries. Up to a maximum of 15 French-language school boards in the province will be established as part of the amalgamation process. The position of school trustee is a part-time position and will be compensated as such. The new board boundaries will be identified in time for the 1997 municipal elections with a limit setting the maximum annual compensation for trustees at $20,000 also taking effect at that time.

The government will introduce legislation to require school boards to establish shared service agreements in order to achieve cost-efficiencies and to give the Minister of Education and Training the authority to impose shared service agreements on school boards where boards do not on their own implement cost-saving measures. Boards will also be enabled to enter into agreements with other publicly-funded entities for certain purposes. Boards will be required to report annually to the public on the savings achieved through shared services.

Milestones

- The government will introduce enabling legislation to support implementation of school board reductions, setting of limits on trustee compensation, and mandatory shared service agreements for school boards.
- A four-member Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force was created in February 1995 to oversee the establishment of French-language school boards and to effect school board reductions through amalgamation. The Task Force will release its proposed new boundaries map in September 1995, conduct public consultations, and make final recommendations to the Minister by December 1995.

- The Task Force will monitor and support the amalgamation process between 1996 to 1997.
- The new school board boundaries will be in place for the 1997 municipal elections.
- Full implementation of the new boards will be effective as of January 1, 1998.
- Annual board reporting on savings through shared services, beginning in Spring 1996.

Related MET communication

March 1995 memorandum from the Minister to Chairs of Boards and Minority Language Sections on the Transition Period.

March 1995 memorandum from the Chair of the Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force to Chairs of Boards and Minority Language Sections, on School Board Reduction.

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APPENDIX 1: MEMBERSHIP LIST

Education Quality and Accountability Office

Board Members

Richard Johnston, Chair
V. Maureen Kempston Darkes
Hoda ElMaraghy
André J. Lalonde
Anthony S. Manera
Fred W. Pomeroy
Bette M. Stephenson

Chief Executive Officer (effective May 1, 1995)

Joan M. Green

Ontario College of Teachers Implementation Committee
(leading to the Ontario College of Teachers)

Registrar

Margaret Macdonald Wilson

Implementation Committee

J. Frank Clifford, Chair
Kathy Bardswick
L. Anne Gagné
Carol Gott
Andrew Hargreaves
James G. Head
MacArthur Hunter
D'Arcy Martin
Marielle G. Simon

School Board Reduction Task Force

John Sweeney, Chair
Jean-Louis Bourdeau
Duncan Green
Dorothy M. Wight

APPENDIX 2:
NEW FOUNDATIONS FOR ONTARIO EDUCATION
KEY MILESTONES ORGANIZED BY SCHOOL YEAR, 1994/95 to 1997/98

1994/95

Ontario College of Teachers implementation committee established	February 1995
Education Quality and Accountability Office established	February 1995
Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force established	February 1995
Parent Guide on Grades 1-9 Curriculum and Standards released in schools	March 1995
"Education as a Model User of Technology" visioning symposium	March 1995
Interim committee to establish Education Information Technology Alliance	March 1995
Consultation with school boards on development of report card	March 1995
Criteria for establishment of school councils to boards	March 1995
Criteria for funding for information technology initiatives to boards	March 1995
Criteria for applications to literacy fund to school boards	April 1995
Criteria for ECE demonstration sites sent to boards	April 1995
Consultation on parent and student rights' documents	April 1995
Pilot projects for 2-year pre-service teacher ed program selected	April 1995
Consultation with school boards and stakeholders on development of school council handbook	April 1995
Development of new comprehensive province-wide tests begins	Spring 1995
Legislation to enable education reform initiatives tabled	Spring 1995
Development of provincial curriculum materials for Grades 1-9 begins	Spring 1995
Development of new graduation requirements begins	Spring 1995
Parents and students' rights documents distributed through schools	June 1995

1995/96

School boards begin implementation of school councils	September 1995
School council handbook distributed to school boards	September 1995
Draft JK-K outcomes/expectations released for consultation	September 1995
First ECE demonstration projects introduced (500 students)	September 1995
Expansion of cooperative education programs	September 1995
OCT Implementation Committee reports to Minister re: OCT mandate	September 1995
School boards begin to develop early literacy plans	Fall 1995
Field-testing of report card model	Fall 1995
Draft JK/K outcomes/expectations released for consultation	Fall 1995
Consultation on proposed school board boundaries begins	Sept - Dec 1995
Recommendations on new board boundaries to Minister	December 1995

EQAO symposium on "Best Practices in Assessment"	Winter 95/Spring
Mandatory annual reporting on cooperative service arrangement savings begins	Spring 1996
Development of outcomes, standards and curriculum materials for Grades 10-12	Spring 1996
School council forum held	Spring 1996
School councils in all schools	June 1996
EQAO makes first annual report to Minister and public	Summer 1996

1996/97

Standards of practice for teachers developed	September 1996
Standards for Math and Language Grades 1-9 implemented	September 1996
Standards for remaining areas Grades 1-9 released for consultation	September 1996
Standard report card implemented	September 1996
New graduation requirements implemented for all students entering secondary school	September 1996
Training of guidance counsellors begins	September 1996
School boards implement early literacy plans	September 1996
Year 2 of ECE demonstration projects begin	September 1996
Draft JK/K school-ready curriculum materials available	Fall 1996
EQAO, boards begin administration of first annual province-wide tests	Fall 96/Spring 97
Provincial framework for professional development announced	January 1997

1997/98

Two-year teacher education programs begin	September 1997
New certification and certification renewal processes implemented	September 1997
JK-K curriculum implementation begins	September 1997
Standards for remaining areas Grades 1-9 implemented	September 1997
Curriculum standards, outcomes for Grades 10-12 implemented	September 1997
Year 3 of ECE demonstration projects begin	September 1997
Junior and Senior Kindergarten assessment guidelines implemented	Fall 1997
New school board boundaries, including French-language school boards, and limits on trustee compensation in place for municipal elections	November 1997
New school boards fully implemented	January 1998

Ontario

Ministry of Education and Training
Ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation

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Minister Ministre

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairs of School Boards and Minority Language Sections

FROM: Dave Cooke

DATE: March 15, 1995

RE: **Education Reform - New Foundations for Ontario Education**

I am writing to you to convey the policy and program decisions that I have taken as Minister of Education and Training in the government's recent response to the report of the Royal Commission on Learning.

As you are aware the government has fulfilled its commitment to respond quickly to the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Over the past several weeks I have made a series of public policy statements on the province's agenda for educational change. New Foundations for Ontario Education is based on many of the recommendations made by the Commission; recommendations that were made after hearing from thousands of Ontarians from across the province and from all walks of life.

I have attached for your information an overview of those policy and program statements and indicate how we will go about implementation. However, I think it is important to comment on the overall context for each of the initiatives. It is important that we all understand that all of these initiatives are inextricably linked. It is the dynamic interaction among these reform initiatives that will give us the momentum to go forward in a meaningful way.

The Royal Commission identified four "engines of change": community involvement, teacher education, investment in early learning and information technology. I have identified accountability as a fifth engine of change. These are the engines that will drive lasting change and bring about excellence in the system. For each of these engines of change, the government and I have made some important policy decisions.

.../2

While this recommendation has received very strong support, I know there is some concern that testing might take up too much of the teacher's time in the classroom. Assessment and evaluation are already integral parts of classroom practice. By incorporating the new provincial testing requirements we think that a balance can be struck between providing parents, students and the public with the information they deserve and allowing for adequate time in the classroom for students to acquire the knowledge and skills we expect from them.

The report of the Royal Commission has helped to focus our attention more than ever on the importance of supporting our teachers. As you know from your personal careers, it is through teachers and what happens between them and students in the classroom that real and meaningful change and improvement to our educational system takes place. Clear standards for professional performance, a plan for ongoing professional development to meet those standards and a mechanism to ensure we meet those standards are goals for educators that are consistent with the goals we have for our students. These goals apply equally to teachers, supervisory officers, principals and ministry staff who are "credentialed".

I have recognized that the teaching profession is ready to take responsibility for meeting these expectations. Self governance through the establishment of the Ontario College of Teachers is a recognition of the importance of teaching as a profession and of the desire and readiness of our educators to accept the challenge of self-regulation. It is important to reinforce that boards remain the employer and that the teachers' federations remain the bargaining agent. The Ontario College of Teachers is not intended to take on either role. The ministry, the College of Teachers, faculties of education, teachers' federations and boards will need to work together to provide the best and most relevant training possible to our teachers. Frank Clifford has been asked to lead the implementation process. Margaret Wilson's appointment as the College's first Registrar will greatly assist both integrity of purpose and effective process.

Ensuring success for all students is an important theme in the New Foundations agenda. The commitment to equity and instilling confidence as learners must surely begin as soon as our children enter our education system. As you know, by investing in children at an early age we can increase the chances for success for all students. Importantly, this investment will result in long-term savings in both social and educational costs.

The early literacy initiative that I have announced, supported by a commitment of $38 million over the next five years, is intended to signal that we really mean it when we say young children are important. Again, the ministry recognizes that many boards have already developed comprehensive and successful early literacy

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Careful and sensitive human resource planning will be an important principle of our implementation activities. I think it is worth reinforcing here that the school board reduction initiative will respect the requirement to maintain public and separate school systems and ensure full governance of French-language education by the Francophone community.

For our part, the ministry continues to make a contribution to the government's overall commitment to downsize the Ontario public service. In addition, we are actively moving forward on "re-engineering" some of our current business processes. We are committed to ensuring that all of our activities have the learner at the centre. This too will take time but I am determined that as a ministry we will model what we are asking of school boards and other community partners. And I look forward to your leadership in helping us develop as a more effective and responsive organization.

Sorry for the long introduction. But we have a very big task ahead of us and effective implementation is everything. In this regard, as you know, I have appointed Michael Fullan, Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Toronto and an internationally recognized expert on change, to advise the Deputy Minister and me on implementation. Michael has already initiated training with ministry staff on effective implementation and will also be available to listen to your concerns and suggestions about implementation.

We know there is a strong public demand for change and there appears to be broad political support in the province for the government's announced reforms. I am impressed by the general support you have given to most of the initiatives. As many of you have stated, these changes are good for students and good for the community. We will have to work together to develop new skills, build more effective partnerships and increased capacity for effective change. It is important that we collaborate to find new ways to stretch our resources and to use them for the right things. Let's keep meeting and moving...toward effective and sensible reform.

Dave Cooke
Minister
Attachments

c.c.: Charles Pascal

Au chapitre de la **participation communautaire**, les conseils d'école constitueront un mécanisme important pour rapprocher les écoles et la collectivité. En donnant l'occasion aux parents, aux élèves, aux enseignantes et enseignants et à la collectivité de conseiller les directrices et directeurs d'école et, le cas échéant, les conseils scolaires, sur les questions locales relatives à l'éducation, nous contribuerons à mieux adapter le système à la diversité et aux besoins locaux.

Un grand nombre de conseils scolaires, de directrices et directeurs d'école et d'enseignantes et enseignants ont déjà élaboré des mécanismes efficaces d'assurer la participation des parents, des élèves et de la collectivité à leurs écoles. Nous pouvons tous nous inspirer de ces réussites et aider celles et ceux qui ne font que commencer ce travail. Le ministère est déterminé à apprendre de vos expériences et à faire connaître ce qui se fait de mieux partout dans la province.

Un **programme d'études commun** prévoyant des résultats quantifiables, disposant de normes précises et de qualité élevée et reposant sur du matériel didactique de premier plan est indispensable à l'excellence de l'éducation de nos enfants. Comme vous le savez, le ministère entreprendra l'élaboration d'un nouveau programme d'études provincial pour assurer un degré élevé d'uniformité partout dans la province du matériel utilisé et un accès équitable à un matériel de première qualité dans toutes les écoles. Nous reconnaissons que de nombreux conseils scolaires ont fait et continueront de faire une contribution importante au développement de matériel didactique exceptionnel. La participation des enseignantes et enseignants et d'autres spécialistes au développement et à l'examen critique du nouveau matériel didactique provincial demeurera un aspect fondamental du processus.

L'élaboration de méthodes créatives et innovatrices pour le développement du programme d'études prendra un certain temps. Pendant que l'on procède à l'élaboration de ces méthodes, le ministère et les conseils scolaires doivent collaborer pour trouver le moyen de continuer à produire du matériel de qualité qui bénéficiera aux élèves.

Des résultats d'apprentissage précis, des normes élevées et du matériel de premier plan et une mise en oeuvre efficace ne sont néanmoins qu'une partie du travail à accomplir. Nous devons savoir si nos élèves atteignent les résultats et répondent aux normes que nous avons fixés. Nous devons également savoir dans quel état se trouve le système et trouver le moyen de l'améliorer constamment. J'ai annoncé une politique prévoyant l'administration de tests pour tous les élèves de 3e, 6e, 9e et 11e année, et la création de l'**Office de la qualité et de la responsabilité en matière d'éducation**, qui collaborera avec les conseils scolaires à la mise en oeuvre de cette politique. Les résultats de ces tests nous indiqueront dans quels domaines les programmes d'études doivent être améliorés, les besoins du personnel enseignant en matière de formation

...3

d'éducation, les fédérations d'enseignantes et d'enseignantset les conseils scolaires devront collaborer pour fournir aux enseignantes et enseignants la formation de la meilleure qualité et la plus pertinente. Encore une fois, un de vos anciens collègues, M. Frank Clifford, a été invité à diriger le processus de mise en oeuvre. La nomination de Mme Margaret Wilson au poste de première directrice générale de l'Ordre contribuera considérablement à assurer l'intégrité du mécanisme et l'efficacité du processus.

La réussite de tous les élèves est un élément important de l'initiative De nouvelles bases pour l'éducation en Ontario. L'engagement en matière d'équité et le développement du goût d'apprendre doivent être favorisés dès que nos enfants entrent dans le système scolaire. Comme vous le savez, en investissant dans nos jeunes enfants nous pouvons accroître leurs chances de réussite. Et, ce qui est très important, cet investissement se traduira par des économies à long terme au chapitre des coûts sociaux et éducationnels.

Les initiatives d'alphabétisation à l'intention des jeunes enfants qui ont été annoncées par le ministre, et auxquelles un montant de 38 millions de dollars sera consacré sur une période de cinq ans, visent à démontrer clairement que nous sommes sérieux lorsque nous affirmons que les jeunes enfants sont importants. Encore une fois, le ministère reconnaît que de nombreux conseils scolaires ont mis sur pied des programmes d'alphabétisation d'envergure et fructueux à l'intention des jeunes enfants. Nous voulons assurer que tous les conseils scolaires disposent de tels programmes et que tous les enfants bénéficient le plus tôt possible de chances de succès.

Des projets pilotes liés au programme d'éducation pour les enfants de quatre à cinq ans seront mis sur pied cet automne et se poursuivront sur une période de cinq ans. Ces projets pilotes pour les enfants de quatre à cinq ans combineront des services de garde d'enfants avant et après les heures de classe dans le cadre d'un programme à plein temps offert au même endroit. La demande de participation à ces projets pilotes sera expédiée au début du mois d'avril et le délai pour y répondre sera très court en raison de l'échéancier. J'ai choisi cette voie parce que je crois que notre responsabilité première consiste à veiller à ce que les programmes existants soient de qualité élevée, qu'il est important de tirer des leçons des projets pilotes, que nous devons disposer d'un ou plusieurs modèles solides et économiques parmi lesquels il sera possible de choisir lorsque viendra le temps de mettre en oeuvre le programme obligatoire en l'an 2000, et aussi parce qu'il s'agit d'une approche responsable sur le plan fiscal.

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Pour notre part, le ministère continue de faire une contribution à l'engagement général du gouvernement de réduire les effectifs de la fonction publique de l'Ontario. En outre, nous procédons à l'heure actuelle à la réorganisation de certaines de nos méthodes de travail. Nous voulons que toutes nos activités soient axées sur les apprenantes et apprenants. Cela aussi exige du temps, mais je suis déterminé à veiller à ce que le ministère mette en pratique ce qu'il exige des conseils scolaires et de ses autres partenaires communautaires. À cet égard, je suis convaincu que je peux compter sur votre collaboration pour nous aider à façonner une organisation plus efficace et mieux adaptée.

Je m'excuse de cette entrée en matière interminable. Mais nous avons un travail considérable à accomplir et tout repose sur une mise en oeuvre efficace. D'ailleurs, comme vous le savez, j'ai nommé M. Michael Fullan, doyen de la faculté d'éducation de l'Université de Toronto et expert sur le changement, reconnu dans le monde entier, pour conseiller le sous-ministre et moi-même au sujet de la mise en oeuvre. M. Fullan a déjà entrepris la formation du personnel du ministère en matière de mise en oeuvre efficace et il sera aussi disponible pour écouter vos préoccupations et vos suggestions sur la mise en oeuvre.

Toutefois, nous sommes conscients que le public insiste pour que des changements soient apportés et la réforme annoncée par le gouvernement semble faire l'objet d'un large appui politique dans la province. Je suis impressionné par le soutien que vous avez manifesté à l'égard de la plupart des initiatives. Comme nombre d'entre vous l'avez indiqué, ces changements sont bons pour les élèves et bons pour la collectivité. Nous devrons collaborer afin d'acquérir de nouvelles compétences, d'établir des partenariats plus efficaces et d'accroître notre capacité d'effectuer des changements. Il est aussi important que nous collaborions à l'élaboration de nouvelles façons de tirer le maximum de nos ressources et de les utiliser judicieusement. J'ai apprécié les occasions que j'ai eu récemment de discuter face à face de ces initiatives et des questions qu'elles soulèvent. Continuons de nous rencontrer et de progresser vers une réforme efficace et pertinente.

Le ministre,

Dave Cooke

p.j.

c.c. Charles E. Pascal

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NEW FOUNDATIONS
FOR ONTARIO EDUCATION

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FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

The provincial government is reforming the school system in Ontario. This is the first major overhaul of education in more than 25 years.

These changes will affect everyone in Ontario, whether they have school-age children or not.

Ontario

Excellence in Ontario education

Ontario deserves the finest education system in the world – a system dedicated to excellence and accountable to the public that it serves.

The world around us has changed a lot in the last quarter century. Our education system has to reflect these changes if it hopes to keep pace with the needs of students, parents, and the rest of the community. The province's agenda for educational change is called *New Foundations for Ontario Education*.

New Foundations is based on the recent report of the Royal Commission on Learning. The commission heard the views of thousands of Ontarians and, on the basis of these views, developed a vision for a new kind of education system. That vision is guiding the action now being taken by the Government of Ontario.

We have a strong base on which to build a better education system. Over the years, Ontario's elementary and secondary schools have accomplished a great deal. We intend to build on these strengths to achieve our goals of excellence and accountability.

But there are parts of the school system that have become outdated, ineffective, or simply unfair. We have to fix these problems to make sure we get the highest quality of education for all students in Ontario.

Every dollar, every activity in the education system should be evaluated in light of a single question: "Does it help students learn?" I believe that *New Foundations for Ontario Education* meets that test. And, I believe, it meets the test without raising education taxes or increasing spending.

I hope you will read this brochure about the government's new approach to learning and teaching in elementary and high schools. Our planned initiatives and legislation are designed to create the finest education system in the world.

Dave Cooke
Minister of Education and Training

Here are Ontario's commitments to education:

- ✓ A focus on students
- ✓ Dedication to excellence
- ✓ An education system that's accountable to the public it serves

Let's be clear about what we expect students to learn

A school system that is dedicated to excellence and responsive to the public sets clear, consistent, and high expectations for all its students. It draws on the resources of the whole community. And it also lets everyone – students, parents, employers, and others – know what those expectations are.

Here's the government's plan

- ✔ The Ministry of Education and Training will develop a province-wi curriculum. To begin immediately.
  - This curriculum will cover everything students study from Junior Kindergarten through Grade 12.

- It will spell out clearly what all students are expected to learn wherever they live in the province.

Provincial standards will measure how well students are learning.

- Standards will be developed for science and technology, the arts, and personal and social studies, which include areas such as geography, history, physical education, and health. (Standards for mathematics and language have already been developed.)

A new, standard report card will be designed, for use across the province.

- The report card will provide parents with clear, consistent, and understandable information on how their children are doing at school.
- It will be ready for use in the 1996-97 school year.

Test, teach and learn, test again...

A good school system is responsible to the public and should be able to show that it's getting results in terms of student learning. Regular testing and other forms of assessment show how well students are learning and whether they are meeting provincial standards. Test results help students improve their performance, and let parents know how their children are doing at school. Testing also helps us improve the education system.

Here's the government's plan:

- ✔ All students will be tested in reading, writing, and mathematics in Grades 3, 6, 9, and 11.
- ✔ An independent agency, called the Education Quality and Accountability Office, has been set up to supervise testing in the province.
  - This agency will:
    - maintain public confidence by making sure appropriate tests are carried out properly;
    - communicate the results of testing to the public;
    - monitor the school system to see how well it is working and let the public know;
    - co-ordinate Ontario's participation in national and international testing;
    - conduct reviews of programs and services in schools and school boards;
    - recommend ways to improve the system.

Excellence in teaching is the key to student success

The Royal Commission on Learning said: "Teachers are our heroes. We believe they should be everyone's heroes."

There is no substitute for good teaching. Dedicated, knowledgeable, motivated teachers are the key to exciting schools and to a responsive education system in Ontario. To make sure that Ontario students have the best education possible, we must give new teachers better training, and help teachers who are already in the classroom keep their skills up to date.

Here's the government's plan:

- ✔ Extend teacher training from one year to two years and put more emphasis on practical classroom experience. To begin in September 1997.
- ✔ Establish an independent body, called the Ontario College of Teachers, to set the professional standards teachers must meet not only before entering the classroom but throughout their careers. To begin in January 1996.
  - The college will also respond to complaints from the public.
- ✔ Require teachers to renew their certification every five years through professional development.

Parents, students, and the community shape our schools

Schools should be the centre of people's neighbourhoods. Parents, students, business people, union members, members of community support groups, and many others care deeply about their local school. They should have more say in the way it is run.

Here's the government's plan:

- ✔ All schools must have a school council in place by the end of the 1995-96 school year.
- The make-up of school councils will vary from community to community. However, every council must have as members:
  - parents (a majority), including a parent as the chair
  - a community representative
  - a student (for high schools)
  - the principal
  - a teacher
  - another staff member

- School councils will advise the principal and the school board on issues such as:
  - curriculum
  - the school's budget priorities
  - selection of a new school principal
  - the school's code of behaviour
  - ways of preventing violence and racism in the school
  - ways of keeping parents, students, and others informed of school matters
  - the school-year calendar
  - extracurricular activities
  - ways of keeping close ties with local social, health, and recreation groups

✔ Parents will be represented on the new Ontario College of Teachers, which will set standards for the teaching profession.

✔ After consultation, a statement of the rights and responsibilities of parents and students will be prepared and distributed province-wide. To be ready for September 1995.

Let's give young children a head start

Young children have a boundless ability to learn. Long before starting Grade 1, they are developing the skills that will prepare them for school. Experience in other countries has proved that the earlier a child's learning can be stimulated, the better his or her chances for success at school will be. The earlier education can begin, the fewer problems there will be later on.

New Foundations will give parents greater choice of preschool programs for their children.

In the early grades, more attention must be paid to teaching young children how to speak, read, and write well. Learning problems should be identified early and addressed. Steps are also being taken to make sure all children have fundamental reading and writing skills by the time they finish Grade 3. These measures will give them a stronger start in school.

Here's the government's plan:

- ✔ A new full-day Early Childhood Education Program will be introduced for children aged four and five.
  - It will be offered at a few selected locations in September 1995.
  - It will become available across the province beginning in 2000.
  - Parents will decide whether they want their children to attend all or part of the program.
  - It will be funded through savings in other areas of the education system.
- ✔ All school boards must have programs that provide early and intensive help to students with reading problems.
- ✔ An Early Literacy Fund will be established, with initial funding of $10 million over the next two years. This money will be used to ensure that all children develop reading and writing skills.
  - Schools must have programs to identify and help children with reading problems. The fund will help schools start these programs.
  - The fund will provide money to strengthen teachers' skills in teaching reading and writing.

Students need a more relevant high school program

Here's the government's plan:

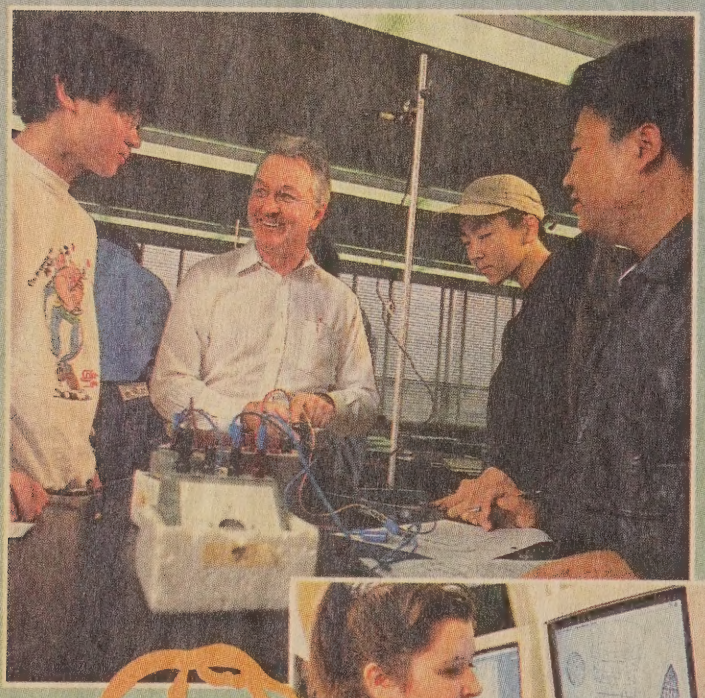
- ✔ Change the high school program so that students can graduate in four years instead of five years.
- ✔ Write a province-wide curriculum for high school, in English and French.
  - The curriculum will spell out what a student is supposed to know and be able to do by the time she or he graduates. To be ready by 1996.
  - It will also include standards, which are ways of measuring how well a student is doing. To be ready by 1996.
- ✔ Have students participate in the new local school councils so that they can give their views on the way their schools are run to principals and school boards.

In high school, students must develop the knowledge and skills they will need to prepare for adulthood and make important choices about their educational and occupational future. It's time to improve the high school program to better meet the needs of students. Ontario is the only province in Canada where many students take five years to finish high school, and it's time to change that too.

Let's get students ready for life after high school

Will they choose work, training, or higher education? High school students should be able to make informed choices about the future – whether it means doing further studies at a college or university or entering a training program or getting a job right away.

To make these choices, all students need good advice from guidance counsellors and up-to-date career information.



Here's the government's plan:

- ✔ Provide all guidance counsellors with the training they need to help students and parents. To begin in September 1996.
- ✔ Expand co-op education programs so that more students can participate in them. To begin in September 1995.
- ✔ Include on-the-job training with local employers as part of a new program for senior students. To begin in September 1995.
- ✔ Sponsor projects in the community that link schools to local career-counselling services for youth.
- ✔ Use the Internet and other computer networks to send students, teachers, and parents up-to-date information on which job skills will be most in demand. To begin immediately.

Technology is our highway to the future

Computers are becoming a more important part of our lives. At home, at school, and at work, it is essential to know how to use computer technology. Ontario students – no matter where they live in the province – need computer skills to learn well, expand their horizons, and prepare for the working world. School is the place to start developing these skills. Ontario classrooms need more computers and more teachers who know how to teach technology skills. The province's goal is to have one computer for every ten students by the year 2000.

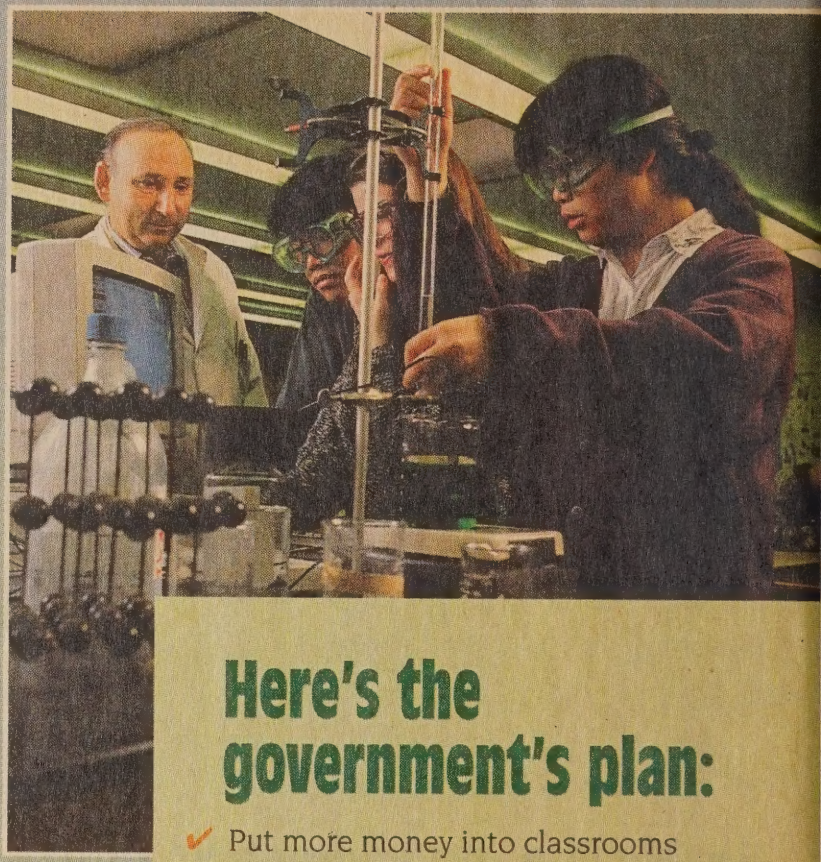
Here's the government's plan:

- ✔ Raise money from private businesses to match money from the government and school boards.
- ✔ Invest up to $520 million in technology over the next five years by:
  - providing more computers for classrooms;
  - training teachers in computer skills;
  - developing new and better educational software for students;
  - linking classrooms to the information highway so that students, teachers, and administrators can share information with other schools and use educational resources from around the world;
  - teaching computer skills in both elementary and high school.
- ✔ At the end of five years, invest $100 million annually to keep making improvements.

Reduce administration...and spend on the classroom

A school is the centre of your neighbourhood, and your child's classroom is the heart of the school. We should therefore be devoting our attention to the classroom and spending our money there.

All children deserve a good education. The more we focus our resources on the classroom, instead of on administration, the better every child's schooling will be.



The Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force

The task force will:

- draw up proposed new school board boundaries;
- hold consultations to discuss new school board boundaries;
- make final recommendations about boundaries by December 31, 1995;
- monitor the merger of school boards.

New school boards will be in place for the 1997 school board elections.

Here's the government's plan:

- ✔ Put more money into classrooms and less money into boardrooms by reducing the number of school boards in Ontario.
- ✔ Create a new body, called the Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force.
- ✔ Limit the amount school boards can spend on administration.
- ✔ Require school boards to share services and personnel, and report their savings to the ministry and public each year.
- ✔ Replace 77 French-language boards and "sections" of boards with a maximum of 15 French-language boards.

School trustees should work part-time

Here's the government's plan:

- ✔ Reduce the number of school trustees. To begin in 1997.
- ✔ Set the top salary for trustees at $20,000 per year. To begin in 1997.

Elected school trustees have an important role to play in setting policy for their school boards. But this role should not be a full-time job. It is the responsibility of administrative staff to run the day-to-day operation of school boards.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Do you have questions about the school system?
Call 1-800-387-5514 (toll-free in Ontario),
325-2929 (in Toronto)

Do you want to reach the ministry electronically?
Send e-mail inquiries to: public.inquiries@edu.gov.on.ca
You can retrieve information about education on the Internet Gopher service. The Gopher host name is: gopher.edu.gov.on.ca

Do you want to reach the Ontario government bookstore?
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If you wish to go in person, the address is:
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If you wish to order by telephone, the numbers are:
1-800-668-9938 (toll-free in Ontario), 326-5300 (in Toronto)

Yes, I want to know more about *New Foundations for Ontario Education.* Please send me the following free publications.

- ☐ *Report to Parents: A Special Issue on the Common Curriculum* – a plain-language description of the Common Curriculum
- ☐ *New Foundations for Ontario Education: A Summary* – a summary of the reforms being undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Training

☐ English ☐ French

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